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ABSTRACT

Three factors in the 1990s will increase the importance of schools in the development of children. First, the character of schools will change as more students with special educational needs are integrated into mainstream classes. Second, efforts will be made to keep these students out of specialized teaching arrangements and in normal classrooms. Third, decision-making power will be decentralized down to the school level. The initial reaction to these changes is likely to be substantial variation in the quality between schools. In conjunction with these changes, increased pressure on schools to be more effective will challenge many assumptions of school-effectiveness research. A rapid development of school-effectiveness and school-improvement work is needed for the 1990s. Since school influence on children's development is likely to increase, it is vital that continuing doubts about education policy be removed. There must be a closer link between school-effectiveness researchers and different disciplines. Psychology, psychiatry, and disciplines of interpersonal relationships are the most important specialties that must be brought into school-effectiveness research. (Contains 43 references.) (JPT)

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"Changing School Improvement Strategies for the 1990's"

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Introduction

A number of important factors will continue to increase the influence that schools have over the development of young people in the 1990s and beyond. Firstly, the school populations of elementary and, especially, secondary schools are now changing rapidly as children with what we call in Britain 'special educational needs' (children with physical, behavioural or learning problems) are re-integrated into schools with other so-called 'normal' children. This movement is common to all the major industrialised nations of the world (with the exception of some Scandinavian countries who were integrating already) and, whether the integration is total or partial, will put into schools groups of pupils highly sensitive to their school and classroom environment. Assuming all other factors remain unchanged and particularly that variation between schools continues to exist at least at its present levels, the result of this changing pupil population will be a substantial increase in the influence of the school.

Secondly, and again this is an international phenomenon, the increased policy concern to keep troublesome, delinquent or disturbed children within the normal school setting (rather than utilising specialist, expensive and clearly highly ineffective special residential homes or units) will put into mainstream schools another group of pupils whom the evidence suggests also to be highly influenced by their schools (Graham, 1988). Indeed, there is a substantial volume of literature (eg Gottfredson, 1987; Reynolds and Sullivan, 1981) which suggests that educational failure and the effects of schools in the generation of this failure may lie behind many of the antisocial demeanours that concerned virtually all industrialised societies in

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the 1980s. Again, schools' influence on young people will increase because of the greater recruitment of young people highly sensitive to the quality of what they are being offered within their educational settings.

The third process which will increase school influence upon young people is the highly prevalent policy of decentralisation of power within the educational system down to the level of the school. There are, of course, substantial variations between countries (and even within some North American countries) in the precise nature of the relationships between the increasingly autonomous schools, and the other `meso' or `macro' levels of the educational `state', whether local, provincial or national. In Britain, for example, the major mechanism of quality control will be locally determined market mechanisms of parental choice, whereas in some Australian states the clear intention is to use a range of central state monitoring and inspection arrangements to discover and improve what central data collection shows to be the ineffective schools. (See country reports in Reynolds et al., 1989 and Creemers et al., 1989).

Whatever the variation may be across cultures, a common result is likely to be, in the short term at least, a substantial increase in the variation in their quality between schools, since the common factors which all schools had when their school districts or local education authorities were involved with them are being simply removed. In addition to the major influences upon school practice that are to be removed, the huge additional range of powers, roles and responsibilities that will fall upon schools and particularly upon their principals or headteachers, will also increase school variability substantially, because of the ways in which the schools will differ markedly

in their ability to cope with rapid externally induced changes, a variability that is likely to be more marked than when the rate of external change was slow. It may be, of course, that mechanisms of local or national quality control will, in the medium to long term, reduce the variability of school quality. In Britain, for example, the clear intention is that schools judged by parents to be ineffective will rapidly lose pupil numbers and will eventually shut, with staff simply losing their jobs (Hargreaves and Reynolds, 1989). In the medium to long term, then, variation between schools in their quality may narrow but in the short term, however, an increase in the effects of schools because of a substantial increase in the variability of schools seems inevitable. It is frankly very worrying that those who are pulsing along in the fervour of the school decentralisation movement seem unable to recognise these likely effects.

Superimposed upon these changes which increase – my hypothesis would be greatly increase – the effects of schools or school influences, demographic changes mean that governments in major industrialised societies will be faced with cohorts of young people leaving school which are perhaps 20/25% smaller in their overall numbers than five years ago, the result of course of the small secondary school cohorts that have been caused by the dramatic decline in the birth rate in the late 1960s and 1970s. Assuming that the demand for labour in various societies remains roughly the same, no society will be easily able to tolerate in the future the 15–20% of young people who `drop out' as in the United States, or the 10% of young people who leave school without any formal public examination qualifications at all, as in Britain. Government's, then, are likely to be even more concerned with the quality of educational

institutions, with their outcomes and with their schools' effectiveness and possible improvement, a concern that is bound to intensify as the countries of the Far East and the Pacific Basin begin to show economic results from their rapid expansion in the resources available to education over the last five to ten years.

The School Effectiveness Knowledge Base

The need for research and development in the general disciplinary areas of school effectiveness and school improvement is therefore, in my view, likely to be even greater in the 1990s than it has been in the 1980s and 1970s. The increased pressure for educational systems to attain results will be there, but the school systems themselves are likely to have become more heterogeneous in their quality and are likely to be presented increasingly with 'at risk' young people who are likely to have very sensitive reactions to their schools, and over whom they are likely to have a substantial influence. To meet the challenge of this new set of educational circumstances, what needs to be our agenda for the future of research on school effectiveness?

The development of the field over time has been extensively described by myself and others elsewhere (Reynolds et al., 1989; Creemers et al., 1989; Creemers and Scheerens, 1989) so only a brief outline seems necessary. In both the United States and in Britain, studies such as that by Coleman (1966), the work of Jencks et al. (1971) and the British Plowden Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (1967) all concluded that schools bring little independent influence to bear upon the development of

their pupils. This period has been gradually followed in both societies by the emergence of a wide range of `effective schools', `school effectiveness' or `school effects' studies which argue for the importance of school influence, beginning in the United States with various case studies and moving on to a wide range of quantitative studies, and beginning in Britain with work by Power et al. (1972), Gath (1977), my own work (Reynolds, 1976; 1982; Reynolds et al., 1987), Rutter et al. (1979), Galloway et al. (1985) and Gray et al. (1986), and subsequently moving on to the recent studies of Mortimore and his colleagues (1988) in primary schools and Smith and Tomlinson's (1989) work in multicultural secondary schools. Work in these two societies has been recently joined by that from the Netherlands, Australia, Canada, and a recent resurgence of studies done in and about Third World societies.

From studies in this wide range of countries, it seems that a number of early simplistic assumptions that were frequently based upon school effectiveness research are now no longer tenable:-

- on the size of school effects, it seems that early beliefs that school influence might be as large as family or community influences were misplaced, since a very large number of studies in the last five years show only 8-15% of the variation in pupil outcomes as due to between school differences (Cuttance, 1990; Bosker and Scheerens, 1989).

- on the causes of school effects, it seems that early beliefs that school influences were distinct from teacher or classroom influences

were misplaced, since a large number of studies utilising multi-level modelling show that the great majority of variation between schools is in fact due to classroom variation and that the unique variance due to the influence of the school, and not the classroom, shrinks to very small levels (Scheerens et al., 1989).

- on the consistency of school effects, it seems that early beliefs that `effective', or `ineffective', schools stayed so over quite considerable time periods of five to seven years were invalid, since it now appears that school performance can very quite rapidly over two or three years (Nuttall et al., 1989). (The proposed publication of the academic outcomes of schooling, such as the results of national assessment procedures in Britain, involves utilising only one year's figures and is clearly a worrying policy if school performance is unstable).

- on the relative consistency of the performance of schools across a range of outcome measures, it used to be thought that the `effective school' was so across a range of both academic and social outcomes, yet now we have much evidence that schools need not be effective or ineffective `across the board'. The recent Junior School Project of Mortimore et al. (1988) showed, for example, a virtually complete independence of schools on different outcome measures, suggesting strongly that academic effectiveness is not necessarily associated with social or `affective' effectiveness.

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- on the question of effectiveness across different groups of pupils, the traditional belief that schools are effective or ineffective for all sub-groups of pupils within them is no longer tenable in view of the evidence that there can be different school effects for children of different ethnic groups, ability ranges and socio economic status within the same school (Aitken and Longford, 1986; Nuttall, 1989).

- on the question of what factors make schools more or less effective, the traditional belief (Edmonds, 1979) that there was a blueprint or 'recipe' independent of school history, context or personnel is no longer tenable, since what is effective may vary in accordance with the context of the social environment of the school's catchment area (Hallinger and Murphy, 1986), with the stage of development of the school itself (Stringfellow and Teddlie, 1990), and with the particular outcome measure being considered (Mortimore et al., 1988). Even if the characteristics of effective schools are found to be similar across contexts, the actual generation of these characteristics at the level of day-to-day school management may be different, as shown in the American work of Brookover et al (1979) and in a neglected study by Galloway (1983) in New Zealand, where four schools exhibiting low rates of disruptive behaviour exhibited similar 'effective school' characteristics but also contained two autocratic principals, one democratic and one of 'mixed style'. The principals all generated 'collegiality' amongst their staff groups and all generated effective school outputs, but they did so in different ways appropriate to their own personalities, the dynamics of their local contexts and the stage of development of their school.

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On the last issue of what makes schools effective, it is abundantly clear that there is no cross cultural agreement on this matter. Assertive instructional leadership from the principal recurs repeatedly in North American five, six or seven factor theories of school effectiveness, and is empirically verified in recent American school effectiveness research (Levine and Lezotte, 1990), yet is not an important factor determining school effectiveness in the great majority of the Dutch research on effective school practices (Scheerens and Creemers, 1989). Frequent monitoring of pupil performance is a characteristic again of some American effective school studies (Levine and Lezotte, 1990), yet this is not found in British primary schools, where in the Junior School Project frequent monitoring of school performance was a characteristic of ineffective schools. (Mortimore et al., 1988).

The resolution of these issues about the size of school effects, their consistency over time, their consistency across outcome measures, their consistency for different types of children within individual schools and the issues concerning the organisational and process factors responsible for school effects clearly necessitates a major research undertaking in the 1990s. Briefly, the research must involve cohort studies, so that the actual increments in children's learning and their progress over time (as well as at a point in time) can be studied. The research needs multiple measures of outside school or intake factors, probably including pupil ability and a wide range of family and environmental factors, to ensure that the influences of schools are not over-estimated because of under

specification of intake factors. Research needs to be multi-level in its research design, so that the variation within schools of different classes, pupil groups etc. can be handled statistically. School effectiveness studies need to have measures of academic and social outcomes, and the measurement of the latter of course involves particular problems if they cannot be simply tapped through use of behavioural measures, since the measurement of pupil attitudes is clearly fraught with difficulty. Research into the factors responsible for school effects needs to continue to still consider which factors are responsible, particularly since some studies have found it very difficult to explain variation in social outcomes: the study by Rutter et al. (1979), for example, could find only seven school process factors associated with possession of a low level of delinquency, by comparison with over twenty associated with possession of a high level of academic attainment. Further issues for the research agenda include the study of how school process factors have their effects, which process factors are most important in determining outcomes, which process factors may lead to the determination of other process factors and the study of the interaction between factors, as in the interesting interaction between the classroom level and the school level in ineffective or successful schools (Teddlie et al., 1989).

Whole vast areas of school life are also under researched in terms of their possible relationships with school effectiveness, particularly:

- the nature of the effective instructional practices in the effective school, as argued elsewhere in this volume by Creemers

– the curriculum content, organisation and knowledge base of effective schools.

Crucially, adequate specifications of the levels of resources that are available to schools have in recent years rarely featured as independent school variables ever since the widespread criticism of the use of `quantity of resources' as measures of school quality and school processes that featured in some of the early North American school effectiveness studies (Averch et al., 1971). In the twenty or more years since these studies, inequalities between schools in their levels of resource availability have probably increased dramatically, especially in societies such as America where schools are still predominantly locally funded and in societies like Britain where inequalities between geographic and social groups have been maximised as part of deliberate governmental policies. I doubt very much if all school subjects are equally affected by any substantial variations in the availability of school resources, since teaching in subjects like science is clearly more resource dependent than in subjects such as reading or history, but I suspect that were we to use sensitive measures of resources now, and particularly if we were able to measure the relationship between the quantity of resources and educational outcomes at an individual pupil level, then resource levels might assume a much larger place in our explanations of school performance.

Our final research needs in school effectiveness are for the generation of theories, probably of the middle range variety, which can link together sets of potentially disparate findings in ways that would both structure the field and make it more accessible for practitioners, and are secondly for the

generation of good practice related case studies in which data would be 'sliced' horizontally rather than vertically, thus permitting the proper picture of effective school processes in interaction with each other within one school that is so necessary for any improved practitioner take up of the insights of our collective school effectiveness work. Further speculations about the future research agenda are available in Reynolds (1985), Reynolds et al. (1989) and Creemers et al. (1989).

The Effective School in the 1990s

I suspect, though, that the 1990s will provide an even more difficult agenda for school effectiveness researchers and practitioners than that caused by attempting to unravel the unresolved problems of the 1980s research base, formidable though that task clearly is. This is because of two further factors.

Firstly, the range of outcomes expected from schools is likely to be significantly enlarged by the addition of various competencies perceived as needed by the world of work (such as ability to access information or social outcomes like ability to work as a part of a team) and by the addition of further competencies required by an increasingly information orientated society (such as knowing how to learn, knowing how to find out, etc). Given the nature of these competencies, I suspect that they may not always, or even often, have been produced by the sort of schools that are currently labelled as possessing 'effective' organisational processes. If the future society needs 'active' individuals who have acquired learning-to-learn skills, an ability to work co-operatively and a

more active, learner directed mode of operation, then very new instructional methods will be required which turn passive learning into active learning, which entail putting more responsibility upon the student and which entail putting the teacher consciously in the role of helping students to learn how to learn. These may be not the sort of skills which would be likely to emanate from the classic models of the effective school, especially in the American formulation, with its ordered climate, assertive principal leadership, concentration upon basic skill acquisition, collegial/consensual mentality and concern with conventional academic outcomes. Significantly, where arguments for, and visions of, new kinds of educational processes exist at present, those within these newer traditions see themselves as directly opposed to the sort of educational philosophy and practices that they see reflected within school effectiveness five or seven factor theories (see Cuban, 1988; Holly, 1990).

With the need for new outcomes, then, will come a need to reassess completely the usefulness of the organisational processes which we have concentrated our past efforts upon describing and analysing, and we will have to move on to attempt the most difficult task of all: that of describing which classroom and school processes may actually be effective in generating the ability to learn as well as the ability to think. These are not areas which we have concentrated upon in the past.

The second factor making for disciplinary difficulty in the 1990s is that our research agenda will be further complicated by the changed nature of the leadership and management tasks required of teachers and particularly of senior teachers in their schools. These changes are produced by the

effects upon management styles of the ways in which schools are increasingly having to compete against each other in forms of educational `markets', a change which is most marked in Britain with its provisions under the 1988 Education Reform Act but which is also increasingly in evidence elsewhere in the world: as James Coleman said to all countries at the 1990 Congress meeting, if you haven't seen parental choice yet, just wait! The move from having a situation of one `producer' of education in the form of a district or state or local education authority having influences over all schools, to a situation of multiple producers of the goods of `education' is ultimately bound to result in increased competition between the producers, all of which will be chasing the client (the pupil) or more likely the client's parents. This competition between producing schools is likely to come either immediately, as it has already in Britain, or to follow on in a few years time in other societies, especially if the centralised attempts at quality assurance break down in cultures attempting them.

The result of this process of market competition between schools is to vastly change what is necessary for effective leadership at school level, because it changes what managerial qualities are needed to create an effective school. New managerial skills will be needed:

- a heightened public relations or marketing orientation and an ability to `sell' the product.

- the capacity to relate to parents.

- the capacity to find sources of support in local communities.

- the capacity to manage rapid change, not to manage a steady state orientation.

- the capacity to motivate staff in times when instrumental rewards like promotion or advancement are rare.

- the capacity to relate to pupils, since the wave of future consumerism will, I suspect, increasingly involve consumer opinion surveys with pupils.

Generally, there will be a decrease in self initiated tasks and an increase in other directed ones, an increase in role set, greater pressure upon time, the need to monitor school and programme quality and an increased entrepreneurial or brokerage function of matching programmes, personnel and expected markets together. There is even likely to be an increased need for principals and senior managers to be financially competent, numerate and perhaps open to the ways in which they can maximise the income from what will be increasingly called their `plants' (ie. their schools).

It would be very surprising if the effective school or the effective principal or effective headteacher of the 1990s bears more than a very superficial relationship with the effective principal as we now describe him or her. The complexity of the situation in which he/she is likely to be, the very real problems of motivation of colleagues, the overload of pressures (and

in the case of Britain of policy enactments also) – all these are likely to call for a style of effective principal very different to that practised by the thoroughly one dimensional creatures that stalk through the present-day leadership literature within school effectiveness. It may be, of course, that the effective school as now described and the effective principal as now described will remain as a description of the 'effective principal/school' in 1990s, but I doubt that very much indeed. What worked in the 1970s is simply unlikely to travel well to the educational world of the 1990s.

The Need for Psychology

The difficulty of the task that is facing school effectiveness researchers and practitioners in the 1990s is increased in its magnitude and its effects because of the isolation of the discipline from sources of intellectual renewal in other cognate and related disciplines. School effectiveness research in the United States of course actually began outside the mainstream educational research community and within the educational system itself it was inspired of course by the late Ron Edmunds, who was a school board superintendent. In Britain, the first four papers published on school effectiveness in the 1960s and 1970s came from a social medicine unit, a child guidance consultant, an epidemiology unit and an Institute of Psychiatry, not from conventional sources of empirical educational research.

The price that has been paid for this splendid disciplinary isolation is obvious. The reluctance of school effectiveness researchers to undertake research to specify the exact nature of the instructional processes within

concentrated, to put it simply, upon the first dimension of schooling – the formal, reified, organisational structure – without looking in enough detail at the second, cultural and informal world of values, attitudes and perceptions, which together with the third dimension of the complicated web of personal relationships within schools will determine a school's effectiveness or ineffectiveness.

This neglect of school culture and school interpersonal and psychological processes is very costly because I suspect we truly need psychology (or perhaps even psychiatry!) to understand the `deep structure' of the ineffective school. In our experience, the staff culture in this type of school may exhibit many of the characteristics of the `inadequate', ineffective or insecure person (see Reynolds, 1987 for further speculations on this theme). These are:

- projections of individual teachers' deficiencies onto the children or the surrounding community and its parents, as excuses for ineffectiveness

- `clingons' of past practice, (we've always done it this way!)

- defences, whereby teachers have built walls to keep out threatening messages from outsiders

- fear of attempting change because it may fail, associated with a reluctance to risk

effective schools is in part explicable by the isolation of the great majority of school effectiveness researchers from the broader traditions of teacher/instructional effectiveness in the United States and elsewhere. Our inability to move beyond the most simple characteristics and typologies of school organisational processes owes much to our isolation from the strong research traditions within educational sociology and the sociology of the school, particularly where the latter has been well researched and documented as in Britain (and to a lesser extent the United States). Our isolation from criminological research cuts us off from the large volume of literature on the role of the school in creating deviant pupils by means of the interactive influence of various within-school factors. One will still learn far more about the reasons for school effects on their pupils from a glance at the compendium of evidence contained in the famous Task Force Report of the Presidents Commission on Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Crime of 1967 than from the accumulated wisdom of school effectiveness studies.

The most important, and damaging, isolation of all for school effectiveness research is from the disciplines of psychology and psychiatry and particular from specialities such as abnormal psychology. References to psychological findings, and an appreciation of psychological or psychiatric insights are rarely found within the school effectiveness community and, crucially, rarely within the literature on school improvement, with the exception perhaps of Sarason (1971). I suspect this isolation is very damaging, since there are likely to be very complicated inter-personal processes at work in the effective, and particularly in the ineffective, schools that our research tradition has customarily ignored. We have

– the fantasy that change is someone else's job

– the `safety in numbers' ploy, whereby the staff retreat into a ringfenced, mentality

The culture, then, will be somewhat weary, fatalistic, used to failure and unused to the risks necessitated by changed organisational practices. It will be that defensive apparatus which is employed by the inefficient and the insecure to protect themselves from any outside influences which may expose them and their inadequacy.

In addition, the third dimension concerning the interpersonal processes of the staff group is likely to be psychologically abnormal. The staff is likely to be organised into strongly demarcated sub groups, with perhaps hostile relations between them. There is unlikely to be any shared value system because the friendship groups act as props to their members linked professional and personal ideologies.

If this means of characterising the second and third dimensions of schooling is an appropriate and accurate one, then it must be obvious that the literature on inter-group, psychological, psychiatric and interpersonal processes would considerably aid us in our understanding of effective and ineffective school processes and, most importantly of all, in our understanding of how to improve schools, the issue that we will turn to consider next.

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School Improvement in the 1990s

If the 1990s pose real problems for us in terms of the adequacy and validity of our body of knowledge on school effectiveness and its appropriateness at times of rapidly changing educational and societal circumstances, then the same problems are often more apparent in the field of school improvement. The body of knowledge in this area is now extensive and has been excellently described elsewhere in this volume by Michael Fullan, so there is no point in reviewing it again. It is clear from this review that intellectually we are beginning to acquire `good improvement practice' but I suspect from our experiences in Britain that we still have a long way to go, because of the poorly explained and conceptualised psychology of the change process that is in evidence within the improvement literature. It is at this point – the point of how to manage institutional change – that most studies of school improvement are in my view most opaque, most vague and most unhelpful. Indeed, the school improvement knowledge base reminds one of Gertrude Stein's definition of California – `the trouble is that there's no there, there'.

If one accepts the description of the ineffective school and its organisation, its interpersonal processes and its culture offered above, then it is clear that school improvement attempts must take account of the complex web of psychological abnormality and pathology in order to be successful. To assume, as virtually all do, an empirical/rational approach which presumes the rationality and psychological normality of the targeted school is mistaken both tactically and operationally if the school culture, values and inter-processes are essentially non rational and abnormal. Very little that

one reads in the school improvement literature, with the notable exception of the British work by Jones (1988) and the seminal contribution of Elizabeth Richardson's `Nailsea studies' (1973), is of use to us in our task of school improvement, since it does not address the sorts of problems and dilemmas which face those of use who try to bring the knowledge base of school effectiveness to ineffective schools. There may be cultures in which North American school improvement literature may be appropriate and within which it may be effective, but unfortunately in my experience the schools in which we have worked do not fall into this category.

The following example will, I hope, illustrate this point in more depth. More detailed accounts of this attempt to improve a school can be found elsewhere (Reynolds and Murgatroyd, 1984; Reynolds, 1987) and are forthcoming, but, briefly, a team from University of Wales, College of Cardiff was invited by a local school that perceived itself as ineffective and underperforming to join with them as `consultants' to resource the school's improvement efforts. Our consultancy role was to bring to the school the best available knowledge and evidence on school effectiveness, discuss with the school what aspects of the knowledge base were seen as appropriate to its local context and then evaluate the success or failure of the change attempt and feed back the results to the school for further consideration.

As we began our work with the teachers in the school, many processes began which the school improvement literature had given us no warning about. Taken in turn:

1) The staff of the school were unused to discussing educational matters, other than at the level of discussion of individual children who might have been `problems' or who had perhaps distinguished themselves in conventional terms. Introducing educational ideas, the language in which they were couched and their apparently advanced modes of conceptualisation into the school caused immense problems, because staff inexperience in handling discussions on complex educational issues resulted in them being unable to separate the personal and the political. They were unable to argue educational `points of view' without getting personally involved in the process, due to a deficiency of interpersonal and communication skills. Increased interpersonal conflict, a breakdown of some pre existing relationships and much interpersonal hostility in some cases were the results of our attempt to introduce outside ideas into a school.

2) We attempted to `open up' the culture of the school by employing various devices. The `behind the closed door' mentality whereby teachers had few contacts at a professional or intellectual level with other teachers we attempted to end by the introduction of `pupil pursuit'. This technique involved a member of the teaching staff shadowing an individual pupil through that pupil's entire morning or afternoon of schooling, in order to understand what the school experience and its shortcomings must have looked like for the `consumer' of education. This tactic too generated a rapid further deterioration in interpersonal relations. Many staff realised for the first time the incompetence of their colleagues, having experienced it

at first hand rather than merely encountering it through rumour or innuendo.

There were other strategies which we utilised that eventually helped to solidify the staff group and make it re-form around the new body of knowledge that we had interpreted as `good practice'. We opened up the school's management team through greater democracy, more openness, the keeping of minutes of meetings etc, thereby encouraging the staff to `take on' their management and thus solidify in terms of interpersonal relationships as they did it. We introduced some quasi-group work, small group and experiential interventions to try to repair interpersonal damage. Eventually, although there were numerous individual casualties of the change process (including the headteacher who retired with an apparent breakdown), the school emerged a stronger and more effective institution and is now more able to handle the complex interpersonal difficulties that school improvement brings.

The world that we encountered at this school was, to return to my theme, far removed from the picture painted of school improvement within educational institutions in the North American school improvement literature. The teachers were unable to engage in rational discourse about the directions in which they should move without a degree of personal growth, both as individuals and in terms of their collective interpersonal processes. The culture of the school, both in the sense of the school's set of taken-for-granted understandings and in the sense of its interpersonal relationships, acted as blocks on change. The knowledge of the rational-empirical paradigm encountered irrationality, emotionality, abnormality and

what can only be called personal and group disturbance. Conventional school improvement programmes of the 1980s may `play in Peoria' but they do not `play' in Wales.

School improvement in the 1990s must therefore, in my view, move in very different directions to those of the 1980s. It must deal with the culture of schools, as well as with their structure. It must concern itself with the informal world of the school, as well as with the formal world. It must concern itself with the deep structure of values, relationships and interpersonal processes, as well as with the world of behaviour. It must ensure that it takes account of the need to manage the interaction between the body of improvement knowledge and the collective psyche of the school.

Most important of all, the world that schools find themselves in during the 1990s is likely to be, in terms of the direction and orientation of educational change, very different to that which has been deemed appropriate for the utilisation of past educational improvement models. Put simply, the 1980s were times when school improvement attempts sought to produce internally generated school change. Indeed the whole `ownership' paradigm was based upon the need for school teaching staffs to own the improvement attempt so that it would be able to pass from the implementation to the institutionalisation phases without hindrance. Yet in the 1990s in many countries like the United Kingdom, it is clear that educational change is now externally generated, to which the internal organisations of schools are forced to adjust. The introduction in a British context of a `market choice' system of educational provision with severe

market penalties for those unable to compete effectively, is a major external change to which schools must adjust in institutional terms. The school improvement literature that is on offer is not just deficient because it does not acknowledge the importance of the psychological dimensions of within school life, then. It is maybe by now highly dated, because it was based on the now inappropriate premise that school improvement attempts are internal, and are not school based attempts to respond to externally generated change. I would therefore be surprised indeed if the `good practice' generated by the educational experience of the 1980s were to be appropriate models for the schools of the 1990s.

I suspect that a productive future for school improvement may lie in its acknowledgement as a discipline that it has been reactive in nature, rebounding from the practice of what it sees as ineffective and inappropriate school improvement strategies but by doing so only rebounding towards equally inappropriate attempts and models. The school improvement strategies of the 1970s were generally based upon acquisition of elite knowledge, were `top down' and externally generated in orientation, were individually targeted and were predominantly based out of schools. (See Reynolds, 1988 for further elaboration on this theme). In opposition to this paradigm came a new emphasis, reflected in the work of Elliott (1981) in Britain for example, upon the importance of relying upon practitioner knowledge, upon group improvement activity, upon internally generated `bottom up' solutions and on completely school based improvement attempts. Yet of course the basic tenets of the new paradigm may be as educationally unreliable as the old : reliance upon practitioner knowledge may condemn practitioners to ignorance or even, at

best, lead to a futile reinvention of the wheel in each change attempt. Group activity may neglect the crucial factor of individual motivation that lies behind successful improvement : individual greed, occupational ambition and selfishness may be ideologically unsound but still highly effective precursors of school improvement programmes! Likewise, basing school improvement programmes completely within schools may imprison them in an educational jail of poor practice.

School improvement, then, has reactively moved from one paradigm to its opposite, yet the future for the discipline I suspect lies in its acknowledgement that, as Newman noted, `The truth does not lie mid way between extremes – it actually lies in both of them'. School improvement practitioners should perhaps consider that their knowledge base should not be `either' drawn from one paradigm `or' from an oppositional other, but should be drawn from `both' one paradigm `and' the other at the same time. To give an example of how this ideological position may be operationalised in practice, we have ourselves been experimenting in Wales with a novel school improvement programme based upon the following principles of a multi paradigmatic nature:-

- the knowledge base was both the effective schools literature and the practitioner based lore about what made for effective practice

- the programme relied upon individual teachers' motivation for professional education and upon group activity based in the

schools of the participating teachers to ensure permeation within the organisations

- the programme was located outside the school within the university, although the course was school focussed

- the programme was `top/down' in its relationship to school processes (since most participants were senior managers in their schools) but was also `bottom/up' in that attention was given to group based techniques at school level to ensure `ownership'.

- the approach was `empirical-rational' in the sense that the course aimed to generate problem solving change agents, but also involved giving participants information about group work techniques, the social psychology of organisational life and related psychological and psychiatric insights

- the orientation was both behavioural in the sense of being concerned to change programme participants' behaviour and the behaviour of others within schools, and was at the same time concerned with ensuring attitudinal change in the `deep structure' of values and relationship in schools.

The results of our programmes we believe are impressive. Over three quarters of programme participants changed aspects of their school's organisation, with an average of four major organisational changes per

person. Over 85% of these changes had survived in a six year follow up study and the schools that had exhibited organisational change had improved in terms of their academic and their social outcomes by comparison with a group of 'control' schools who were not included in the programme (fuller details are available in Reynolds, Davie and Phillips, 1989). Our suggestion is that school improvement should consider suspending its commitment to different paradigms and investigate further the utility of putting together coalitions of what have been all too often seen as mutually exclusive approaches.

Conclusions

The aim of this chapter has been to present the case that we need a rapid development of school effectiveness and school improvement work in the 1990s. In the case of school effectiveness, the influence of schools is likely to increase, which makes it vital for those with concerns about educational policy that the continuing doubts and uncertainties that exist in the field are more progressively removed. Our argument here has been that only a closer allegiance between school effectiveness researchers and the persons and knowledge bases of different disciplines will enable intellectual progress. Psychology, psychiatry and the disciplines concerned with interpersonal relationships were identified as the most important specialities to relate to in future.

In the case of the discipline of school improvement, also, we have argued that the continued use of the rational-empirical paradigm has neglected the realities of the culture and the inter personal processes of the

ineffective schools, which of course most need improvement and effectiveness knowledge. Such schools have an abnormal staff culture and exhibit a disturbed set of interpersonal relations, and the introduction of improvement programmes and/or effective schools knowledge into them needs to be handled with particular personal sensitivity. School improvement has deep psychological, as well as educational, effects upon schools and it is argued that we need a psycho-therapeutic orientation and psycho-therapeutic mechanisms to deal with this. School improvement programmes and their knowledge base are not, in themselves, sufficient to change schools or their personnel. In addition, the body of knowledge within the 'rational-empirical' paradigm may be well past its shelf life because educational change is now externally, not internally, generated. Multi paradigmatic programmes are suggested as a possible way forward.

It is clear that the international school effectiveness and improvement movement has major intellectual and organisational tasks ahead, and some of the omens are disturbing. In certain countries school effectiveness has already become associated with a narrow, 'back to basics' orientation to the teaching of basic skills and has therefore become much criticised. There are also unresolved tensions between those who have an 'equity' perspective and who believe that effective schools should help disadvantaged populations particularly, and those who see the drive for effectiveness as something that should extend across all social categories. There are also issues concerned with the definition of effectiveness that wait lurking in the wings to cause dissent and disagreement.

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Many of the omens for intellectual progress in the fields of school effectiveness and school improvement are however especially encouraging. There are many in educational and social research who still believe that research should not be related to issues of public policy and who view the direct policy orientation and practical concerns of school effectiveness and school improvement as a cause for concern. However, in the early stages of the development of a discipline there is much historical evidence that a problem orientation or problem solving approach is that which is most likely to generate intellectual advances, as in the case of physiology which developed rapidly in the last century through its close association with the practical needs of clinical medicine. A problem orientation prevents elaborate flights of theoretical and philosophical fancy which often lead into the realms of metaphysics. It does not mean that any of the theoretical problems that will arise from consideration of practical issues should not be investigated. It does mean that theoretical discussion will be erected on the foundation of an empirical, practical knowledge base. If it is true, as I believe, that is through a proper consideration of practical issues that educational research is most likely to make major theoretical advances in the next few decades, then there is no group of persons who are more practical than those in the fields of school effectiveness and school improvement, and no group of persons who are therefore better qualified to make rapid intellectual progress.

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